UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.6/1994/L.15
15 March 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Thirty-eighth session
New York, 7-18 March 1994
Agenda item 5

PRIORITY THEMES

Germany*, Greece*, Mali*, Papua New Guinea*, Switzerland*
and United States of America: draft resolution

Gender equality in population programmes

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 1/ which set equality, development and peace as the general objectives and goals for promoting the advancement of women, the World Conference on Education for All, 2/ the United Nations Conference on Environment and

---

* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ Final report of the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990, Inter-Agency Commission (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank) for the World Conference on Education for All, New York, 1990.

Development, 3/ the World Summit for Children, 4/ the World Conference on Human Rights, 5/ and looking forward to the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace,

Recalling the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 6/ adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, which reaffirms, on the basis of equality between women and men, a woman's right to accessible and adequate health care and the widest range of family planning services, as well as equal access to education at all levels,

Emphasizing that the full participation of both women and men in all aspects of productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibilities for the care and nurturing of children and maintenance of the household, is required and in the interest of women, men and children,

Emphasizing that the empowerment of women and the improvement of their status - particularly with respect to education, health, economic opportunity and decision-making, and full political participation and representation - are highly important ends in themselves and are essential to reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and achieving fair and non-coercive population policies that respect women's rights as human rights,

Noting with great concern that rapid population growth makes sustainable development difficult in many developing countries and affects the quality of life of the people,

Recognizing the sovereign right of each country to establish its own population policies and programmes responding to country-specific needs, while mindful that national action or inaction in population may have effects that extend beyond national boundaries,

Recognizing that, because gender discrimination often begins at the earliest stages of life, equal attention to the needs of the girl child is a necessary first step to ensuring that women realize their full potential and become equal partners in sustainable development,

---

3/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (vol. I, vol. I/Corr.1, vol. II, vol. III and vol. III/Corr.1)) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum).

4/ See A/45/625.

5/ Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (Parts I and II)).

6/ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

Emphasizing that the aim of family planning programmes must be to establish the widest possible freedom of choice for women in matters of reproduction,

Emphasizing that, as women bear the full burden of child-bearing and are primarily responsible for child-rearing, no woman should be coerced or forced into any decision on child-bearing,

1. Reaffirms the goal of universal access to safe motherhood, to family planning and reproductive health services and facilities for those who wish to use them, to assistance in preventing and overcoming infertility, and to full and timely information about all aspects of reproductive health and sexuality;

2. Reaffirms, as stated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 7/ that men and women have, on the basis of equality, the same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise those rights;

3. Encourages Governments and non-governmental organizations to promote and encourage the equal participation of women and men in all areas of family responsibility, so that both women and men can balance their domestic and public responsibilities;

4. Urges Governments, intergovernmental bodies and, where appropriate, non-governmental organizations to adopt and implement population and development policies that enhance social and economic equality; include popular participation; incorporate women equally in all levels of planning, decision-making and implementation; address the reproductive health needs of women and men of all ages; respect and protect women's reproductive rights as human rights; and, where levels are still high, significantly reduce maternal and infant morbidity and mortality rates;

5. Urges Governments to make greater efforts to implement and enforce national laws and international conventions protecting women from all types of discrimination, including implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

6. Encourages Governments to acknowledge and implement the recommendations regarding women's rights contained in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights;

7. Also encourages Governments to review, legislate if they have not already done so, enforce and provide public information concerning the minimum age of consent and minimum age at marriage, paying attention to the importance of empowering women so that they may choose education or employment as alternatives to early marriage;

7/ General Assembly resolution 34/180.

8. Urges Governments, where required, to adopt, implement and enforce laws to eliminate infanticide; female foeticide; preferential treatment of boys to the detriment of girls' education, health, self-esteem and quality of life; forced marriages; child labour; child trafficking resulting in child slavery and prostitution; and other forms of child abuse;

9. Urges Governments to prohibit female genital mutilation and other traditional practices which diminish the dignity and integrity of women and, in collaboration with local and regional non-governmental organizations and local communities, to act vigorously to create awareness among concerned populations of the urgent need to eliminate those practices and provide the support services necessary to mitigate their harmful effects;

10. Urges Governments to empower women and close the gender gap as soon as possible by:

(a) Encouraging women's participation and representation at all levels of the political process in each community and society;

(b) Promoting the fulfilment of women's potential through education and development of skills, paying urgent attention to the elimination of illiteracy among adult women and to the importance of education of the girl child;

(c) Eliminating legal, political, social and cultural barriers against women, and assisting women to establish and realize their rights, particularly those that relate to sexual and reproductive health;

(d) Adopting concrete measures to improve women's ability to earn income, achieve economic self-reliance, inherit, own and dispose of property and land, and have access to credit on the basis of equality with men without discrimination;

11. Urges Governments to ensure the widest and earliest possible access by girls and women to secondary and higher education and vocational training, including taking positive actions to increase the school retention rates of girls, with the aim of reducing the current disparities between boys and girls by the year 2000;

12. Urges all countries in a position to do so and appropriate international organizations to provide assistance to developing countries for family planning services, including contraceptives, information and education;

13. Encourages Governments and local and international non-governmental organizations to launch information and education campaigns to change the public perception of the value of the girl child, generate social awareness of the short- and long-term poverty and socio-economic consequences of discrimination against girls and of early motherhood, and establish innovative mechanisms for encouraging protection of and respect for the rights of the girl child;

14. Encourages Governments to review or propose legislation to eliminate all forms of coercion and discrimination in policies and practices related to

employment, marriage, divorce, inheritance, child-bearing, child-rearing, and custody of children;

15. Encourages Governments to develop educational curricula that eliminate gender stereotypes and reflect a commitment to full gender equality;

16. Urges Governments and non-governmental organizations to encourage men to be involved, as partners and fathers, in safe and responsible parenthood and family planning, emphasizing men's shared responsibilities, inter alia, in the areas of prenatal and maternal health, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, prevention of unwanted and high-risk pregnancies, child care, education, health and nutrition and the promotion of the equal value of children of both sexes;

17. Urges Governments to take steps so that children receive appropriate financial support from parents by, inter alia, enforcing child support laws;

18. Urges Governments and non-governmental organizations to develop an integrated approach to the special nutritional, reproductive health, educational and social needs of girls and young women;

19. Urges Governments and non-governmental organizations to involve women in the design of reproductive health care programmes and in the planning, management, delivery and evaluation of services, and to take positive steps to train and employ more women at all levels of the health care delivery system;

20. Urges Governments and non-governmental organizations to support women in their aim to expand and strengthen campaigns to make women aware of the full range of their legal rights, including their rights within the family, and to help women organize to achieve those rights;

21. Urges the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development to focus on the key role of the empowerment of women in population stabilization and sustainable economic development.